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Council Report

October 30, 2009

The last weekly Sagamore West Farmers' Market was October 28th. The fifth season of the market attracted 51 vendors, a 34% increase over 2008. The two-year "Green and Lean" marketing program, funded through a \$38,000 USDA grant, was completed; the program drew additional vendors and increased community support of the market, while promoting the health benefits of farmers' market produce. The annual pre-Thanksgiving market will be November 25th. Thanks to market master Kathleen Mills and assistant Eddie Yeoman for their excellent work this year.

West Lafayette Parks and Recreation was featured in the Indiana Parks and Recreation Association quarterly magazine, *The Profile*; a copy of the article is attached.

Thanks to the 25 Purdue Hilltop Apartments students who pulled weeds and cleaned-up the daylilies around the Police Station and to the Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society's RIP (Remove Invasive Plants) Squad for their continuing work in Celery Bog Nature Area and Happy Hollow Park.

Thirty-four children enjoyed the grades 4-6 volleyball program this fall.

Riverside Skating Center is scheduled to open for the season with public ice skating sessions at 1-3 pm, 4-6 pm, and 7-10 pm on November 27th, weather permitting.

The next Park Board meeting will be November 16th at 4:30 PM in City Hall.

**Parks and Recreation—
The Benefits Are Endless**

Member of Indiana Park
and Recreation Association

Member of National Recreation
and Park Association

Featured Department

Fun and Fitness in West Lafayette

By Joe Payne

West Lafayette is a very diverse community, with people "recreating all over the place," in the pursuit of fun and fitness, and that keeps West Lafayette Parks and Recreation very busy.

The mission of West Lafayette Parks and Recreation is to enhance the quality of life in the city by providing the best possible recreational facilities and programs for its citizens through effective management of natural, human, and financial resources.

West Lafayette Parks and Recreation (WLPR) serves approximately 30,000 city residents with 17 full time and three regular part time employees. About one-fourth of city residents are Purdue University students. Of course, the other 30,000 university students who are "not in the city" and the 160,000 people in the Tippecanoe County area also frequently use WLPR recreational facilities, take advantage of numerous WLPR classes and recreational programs, and enjoy several community festivals, special events, and other activities involving WLPR.

WLPR hires approximately 75 seasonal and other part time employees throughout the year to help carry-out its mission, including operating the pool and ice skating rink; assisting with the playground, youth sports, and adult softball programs; and helping with grounds and trails maintenance. WLPR also has more than 80 independent contractors providing a great variety of popular classes and programs, including the Morton Community Center art, dance, fitness, and educational classes and the Sagamore West Farmers' Market.

Many exceptionally valuable volunteers (particularly Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, and members of the Tree Fund and of the local chapters of the Audubon Society and the Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society) play a very significant role in helping WLPR carry out its mission. These special people staff Lilly Nature Center, conduct natural resources stewardship and education ("Wednesdays in the Wild") programs, coordinate community beautification efforts, and make the Adopt-a-Spot program work. The efforts of these special people, working through the coordination of the West Lafayette in Bloom committee and city staff, earned West Lafayette 1st place in the "America in Bloom 2008" competition for the 25,000 to 50,000 population category. Of the eight "America in Bloom 2008" evaluation categories,

West Lafayette scored 1st in the environmental effort, community involvement, urban forestry, and turf and groundcover areas categories.

WLPR works closely with the Lafayette and Tippecanoe County Parks and Recreation Departments, Purdue University (which provides two high quality golf courses for the public and a recreational sports complex for students and staff), and the Purdue Research Foundation (the largest landowner in West Lafayette) in meeting the fun and fitness needs of the area's residents. Private fitness and recreation businesses in the area also help meet residents' needs. This



Happy Hollow Park Trail in October of 2008.

cooperative spirit of working together to offer a great diversity of facilities and programs, with minimal duplication, certainly helps everyone get a "better bang for their fun and fitness bucks."

The cooperative spirit of working together extends to a commitment to the conservation and enhancement of the Wabash River and its corridor, as well. The focus on the Wabash River was the primary objective identified through the Vision 2020 community planning process earlier this decade. The Wabash River Enhancement Corporation has since been cooperatively established as a not-for-profit entity, with financial assistance from North Central Health Services and local government support, to lead the long term effort.

WLPR manages and maintains more than 450 acres of land. The 13 park properties include Celery Bog Nature Area (195 acres and Lilly Nature Center), Happy Hollow Park (81 acres), Cumberland Park (62 acres), Tapawingo Park (20 acres and Riverside Skating Center), Morton Community Center, and the Municipal Pool. WLPR takes care of 9 playgrounds, 15 shelters, nearly 20 outdoor sports facilities, and several community landscape areas and much of the urban forest.

WLPR also takes care of 15 miles of paved trails, along with four miles of footpaths. The paved trails tie into 10 miles of marked bicycle lanes, as well as a few unmarked connecting routes on low-traffic-volume neighborhood streets, to create a true network of bicycle and pedestrian routes for transportation and recreational use. The Cattail, Nighthawk, Northwest Greenway, Trolley Line, and Wabash Heritage Trails provide the backbone of the network; three of the trails have been designated National Recreation Trails by the U.S. Department of the Interior. WLPR focuses on providing well maintained, safe, and enjoyable

experiences for trail users, regularly inspecting and clearing the trails (including clearing snow from paved trails). The trails network is progressively expanding and improving to further bring together neighborhoods, shopping areas, senior living facilities, the university campus, Purdue Research Park businesses, community parks, and Prophetstown State Park.

The development of West Lafayette's trails network (along with the development of parks and facilities) is the result of the public participation process for preparing the West Lafayette Strategic Plan and the West Lafayette Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Trails projects are also guided by input from the city's Traffic Commission

and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee. The West Lafayette Bicyclist & Pedestrian Transportation Facilities Plan is annually updated to reflect changing priorities and evolving opportunities for trail development, particularly in conjunction with road, wastewater, storm water, and other infrastructure projects. The 2009 plan revision includes the layout for 48 additional miles of paved trail.

The WLPR Trails Guide provides an aerial-photo-based map of the trails, bicycle lanes, and connecting routes. It also provides details about the city parks and nature areas, along with information about Purdue University green spaces and how to contact the other parks and recreation departments and the convention and visitors bureau for additional area recreation information. It is available as a PDF file at <http://parks.westlafayette.in.gov/>. Printed copies may be obtained from the Visitors Center (www.HomeofPurdue.com), as well as in West Lafayette City Hall, Morton Community Center, and Lilly Nature Center.

People, "recreating all over the place," in the pursuit of fun and fitness...that is what West Lafayette Parks and Recreation is all about.